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Does Ancient Hebrew Poetry Have Meter?

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The study addresses the much-debated question of whether Hebrew poetic composition is characterized by meter. I examine the question in the light of ancient Greco-Roman literary theory and its reflections on Greek and Latin periodic prose. Greco-Roman theorists chart a spectrum of poetic composition, with ordinary prose on one end, metered poetry on the other, and poetic or "periodic" prose occupying a middle ground between the two. I show that (a) Hebrew poetic composition is characterized by the same formal devices as Greco-Roman periodic prose; (b) these devices structure Hebrew poetry into the same periodic literary form seen in Greco-Roman periodic prose; and (c) this form produces the same rhythmic effect as in Greco-Roman periodic prose, one that is natural, not intentionally summoned, and of comparative irregularity. Micah 3:9–12, Wilfred G. E. Watson's alleged "good illustration" of "regular metrical pattern," is examined as a case in point.

The question of whether Hebrew poetry is metrical continues to baffle scholarship, with no real consensus having emerged. Until the modern era, interpretive opinion tended toward the quantitative thesis, that Hebrew poetic meter proceeds on the basis of syllable weight (that is, through the regular alternation of long and short syllables, as in classical Greek poetry).[1] Following the groundbreaking work of Robert Lowth, this theory fell out of favor, and in its place emerged the Ley-Sievers-Budde qualitative or accentual thesis that Hebrew poetic meter is formed by syllable stress (that is, through recurring patterns of accented syllables, as in most modern, Indo-European poetry).[2] Though this perspective also came

[1] See Samuel T. S. Goh, *The Basics of Hebrew Poetry: Theory and Practice* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 62; my brief overview draws on 62–76. See also Douglas K. Stuart, *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter*, HSM 13 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 1–10; David L. Petersen and Kent Harold Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, GBS.OT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 39; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*, corrected ed. (1984; London: T&T Clark, 2001), 97–110. Donald R. Vance provides the most exhaustive survey to date (*The Question of Meter in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 46 [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2001], 47–222).

[2] Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 2 vols. (London: Ogles, 1816;

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under serious critique, it still has major advocates such as Wilfred G. E. Watson.[3] Its insufficiencies gave rise, in turn, to various syllable-count and related theories.[4] Absent a clear consensus, scholars increasingly are of the opinion that Hebrew poetic meter simply does not exist and that its rhythmic qualities are best understood instead as a product of parallelism.[5]

Latin original, 1753). The Ley-Sievers-Budde theory is named for its early German advocates: J. Ley, "Origins über hebräische Metrik," *ZAW* 12 (1892): 212–17; Eduard Sievers, *Studien zur hebräischen Metrik*, vol. 1 of *Metrische Studien*, 7 vols., ASGW.PH 21 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901), part 2; Karl Budde, "Das hebräische Klagelied," *ZAW* 2 (1882): 1–52; Budde, "Poetry (Hebrew)," in *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents, Including the Biblical Theology*, ed. James Hastings, 5 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1900–1904), 4:2–13, esp. 5. See also Vance, *Question of Meter*, 97–174, for a critical survey of major proponents from the last century.

[3] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 87–113.

[4] See the discussion in Goh, *Basics of Hebrew Poetry*, 67–69. The syllable-count thesis is most prominently associated with David Noel Freedman and Frank Moore Cross; see esp. David Noel Freedman, "Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry," *ZAW* 72 (1960): 101–7; Freedman, "The Structure of Psalm 137," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971), 131–41; Frank Moore Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, SBLDS 21 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), esp. 129; David Noel Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980). See Vance, *Question of Meter*, 175–206, for a critical review of scholarship in this vein, including some early predecessors of Cross and Freedman. On the more recent syllable/word-count theories of J. P. Fokkelman (*Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible: At the Interface of Prosody and Structural Analysis*, 4 vols., SSN 37, 41, 43, 47 [Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004], vol. 4) and Pieter van der Lugt (*Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry: With Special Reference to the First Book of the Psalter*, OtSt 53 [Leiden: Brill, 2006]), see Goh, *Basics of Hebrew Poetry*, 69. Similar criticisms may be directed toward the consonant-count approach of Oswald Loretz et al. (Loretz, "Die Analyse der ugaritischen und hebräischen Poesie mittels Stichometrie und Konsonantenzählnung," *UF* 7 [1975]: 265–69; Loretz, *Psalmstudien: Kolometrie, Strophik und Theologie, ausgewählter Psalmen*, BZAW 309 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002]; Loretz and Ingo Kottsieper, *Colometry in Ugaritic and Biblical Poetry: Introduction, Illustrations and Topical Bibliography*, UBL 5 [Altenberge: CIS, 1987]); see, e.g., Dennis Pardee, *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism: A Trial Cut (ʿnt I and Proverbs 2)*, VTSup 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 4 n. 8.

[5] The nonmetrical thesis is most famously championed by James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 292–302, as part of a larger argument questioning the value of "poetry" as a descriptor for the more ornate passages of the Hebrew Bible (see esp. 302). Vance also offers a monograph-length treatment in service of the thesis (*Question of Meter*). See, too, M. O' Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 138; Dennis Pardee, "Ugaritic and Hebrew Metrics," in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, ed. Gordon D. Young (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 113–30, here 115; Patrick D. Miller, "Meter, Parallelism and Tropes: The Search for Poetic Style," *JSOT* 28 (1984): 99–106, here 102; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 8; Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, 42; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 99–100. Petersen and Richards describe the nonmetrical thesis as an "emerging scholarly consensus," a descriptor no less apt today.

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At the expense of adding to an already vast body of literature, I propose to examine the question afresh in the light of ancient Greco-Roman literary theory and its reflections on Greek and Latin periodic prose. Commending such an approach is the remarkable correspondence in *form* of Greek and Latin periodic prose and Hebrew poetry, together with the ancient Greco-Roman theorists' considerable insight into that form. I will suggest that the theorists' reflections on their own periodic prose, the so-called Gorgianic figures used to form it, and their effect on "rhythm" offer a better account of Hebrew poetry's rhythmic qualities than most traditional approaches to meter, further bolstering the nonmetrical thesis and its attribution of rhythm to parallelism. In short, I propose that these same "Gorgianic" figures occur in Hebrew poetry as central, formal features; they structure Hebrew poetry into the same periodic literary form as ornate Greek prose and, as a consequence, produce the same nonmetrical, rhythmic effect documented by Greco-Roman theorists in their own literature.

My argument will proceed in a straightforward fashion. First, I will attend to the Greco-Roman theorists' accounts of the Gorgianic figures and show how these are, in essence, the same structural features that biblical scholars have identified, albeit usually with different terminology, as characteristic of Hebrew poetry. Then I will explore the effect of these figures on structure, as the Greco-Roman theorists account for it, and illustrate how their observations hold in the case of Hebrew poetry. Lastly, I will address the Greco-Roman theorists' description of the effect the figures and their symmetrical structures have on rhythm and how that effect compares to the rhythmic qualities of poetry and music. Essentially, the theorists observe that the effect is natural, not intentionally produced, and one of comparative irregularity—observations that again hold in the case of Hebrew poetry.

I. The Gorgianic Figures

Greco-Roman theorists chart a spectrum of poetic composition, with ordinary prose on one end, metered poetry on the other, and poetic or "periodic" prose occupying a middle ground between the two (see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.9.1–10). If we were to chart Hebrew poetry formally along this spectrum, it would undoubtedly fall somewhere in the middle, since by all (modern) accounts it lacks the strict meters of Greek poetry (e.g., hexameter or pentameter), on the one hand, and the unregulated freedom of ordinary Greek prose, on the other.

It is in the theorists' discussions of the middle territory, periodic prose, that we encounter a Greco-Roman theory of poetic device centered on the so-called Gorgianic figures, which, as I have already submitted, is remarkably apt for Hebrew poetry. The Gorgianic figures were the devices famously borrowed from the poets by Sophist orators such as Isocrates and Gorgias (the latter being the oft-credited namesake; see Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.1.8–9) for use in elevated, poetic prose speeches.

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In the classical period, rhetoricians such as Aristotle criticized the Sophist style as excessively ornate (a criticism of a piece with their larger philosophical critique) and commended a moderated use of the devices in all prose writing, speeches included. Thus, the Gorgianic figures came to be the subject matter of rhetorical treatises and handbooks and, more broadly, of literary-critical works of prose style. These rhetorical- and literary-critical works are a valuable source of careful description of the figures, and they provide an accounting of the figures' relationship both to structure and to rhythm.

In most early theorists' accounts, the Gorgianic figures are three in number: parisosis (clausal parallelism), antithesis (clausal opposition of form and/or meaning), and paramoeosis (clausal parallel assonance).[6] The third, however, is a broad device that encompasses a number of unique figures of sound, which are themselves variously counted among the Gorgianic figures.

I briefly define and illustrate each device as follows, using definitions and examples provided by the theorists themselves. In each case, I also identify and illustrate the equivalent device(s) from Hebrew poetry, using examples supplied in Watson's *Classical Hebrew Poetry*.[7] Though the taxonomies and terminology employed by Greco-Roman theorists differ from those of modern biblical scholars, it is apparent that both are dealing with the same general set of devices.

Parisosis

Parisosis is structural parallelism among associated clauses. The theorists define the parallelism ambiguously and, thus, broadly. "Parisosis occurs when a sentence has two equal members. Equality may exist between many small things and a few large things, and between an equal number of things of equal size" (Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet. Alex.* 27 [1436a] [Rackham, LCL]).[8]

[6] Ancient opinion on what constitutes the Gorgianic figures is diverse. On this debate and the figures themselves, see John C. Robertson, *The Gorgianic Figures in Early Greek Prose* (Baltimore: Friedenwald, 1893).

[7] I draw chiefly on Watson because his is among the most thorough of formal analyses, and because his structural analysis entails advocacy for the quantitative metrical thesis, which I challenge below. Virtually any other modern analysis would suffice, however, as a source of illustrations, since there is general agreement about the kinds of devices used in Hebrew poetry.

[8] Also known as parison, isocolon; definitions widely vary. "[E]quality of clauses is parisosis" (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.9.9 [Freese, LCL]). "[Isocolon] is when the clauses have an equal number of syllables" (Demetrius, *Eloc.* 25 [Roberts and Innes, LCL]). "We call Isocolon the figure comprised of cola … which consist of a virtually equal number of syllables. To effect the isocolon we shall not count the syllables—for that is surely childish—but experience and practice will bring such a facility that by a sort of instinct we can produce again a colon of equal length to the one before it.… In this figure it may often happen that the number of syllables seems equal without being precisely so—as when one colon is shorter than the other by one or even two syllables, or when one colon contains more syllables, and the other contains one or more longer fuller-sounding

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ἢ διὰ χρημάτων ἀπορίαν
ἢ διὰ πολέμου μέγεθος

Either owing to lack of funds
or owing to the magnitude of the war.
(Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet. Alex.* 27 [1436a])

In proelio mortem parens oppetebat,
domi filius nuptias conparabat;
haec omina gravis casus administrabant.

The father was meeting his death in battle;
the son was planning marriage at his home.
these omens wrought grievous disasters.
(Rhet. Her. 4.27)

Parisosis is the equivalent of what biblical scholarship has long referred to as "parallelism."[9] In Watson's analysis, there are four types: (1) "parallelism" proper ("proper congruence": a_1, a_2, a_3, … // a_1, a_2, a_3, …); (2) "chiasmus or mirror symmetry" ("reflexive congruence": a_1, a_2, a_3, … // a_3, a_2, a_1, …); (3) "proper anti-congruence" (a_1, a_2, a_3, … // $-a_1$, $-a_2$, $-a_3$, …); (4) "reflexive anti-congruence" ("chiastic": a_1, a_2, a_3, … // $-a_3$, $-a_2$, $-a_1$, …).[10] All four fall within the broader parameters of parisosis as the Greco-Roman theorists define it, and may collectively be viewed as a more careful systemization of possible subtypes. Subtypes (2) and (4) display chiastic parallelism, which is witnessed also in Greek parisosis.[11] Subtypes (3) and (4) may be seen simply as the first two combined with antithesis, which the Greeks and Romans (more consistently, arguably) treat as a separate device altogether (see below).

אַשְׁרֵי־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת רְשָׁעִים
וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמָד
וּבְמוֹשַׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב

syllables, so that the length or fullness of sound of these matches and counterbalances the greater number of syllables in the other" (Rhet. Her. 4.28 [Caplan, LCL]).

Throughout this article, translations of Greco-Roman works are from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise noted. The translator of each work is given with the first citation only. Biblical translations are my own.

[9] See the survey of scholarship in Goh, *Basics of Hebrew Poetry*, 22–58.

[10] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 118–19. The negative sign in this shorthand signifies semantic or gender opposites.

[11] On chiastic or "cross-pattern" parisosis in Greco-Roman literature, see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1998), §723, esp. n. 2.

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Blessed is the one who
walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers.
(Ps 1:1)

אַל־תַּעַזְבֶהָ וְתִשְׁמָרֶךָּ
אֱהָבֶהָ וְתִצָּרֶךָּ

Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.
(Prov 4:6)

וְשָׁפַט בֵּין הַגּוֹיִם
וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים
וְכִתְּתוּ חַרְבוֹתָם לְאִתִּים
וַחֲנִיתוֹתֵיהֶם לְמַזְמֵרוֹת
לֹא־יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב
וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall settle disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.
(Isa 2:4)

See also Pss 1:1; 7:17; 8:4; 15:1; 37:30; 54:9; 57:5–11; 66:8; 85:12; 107:16, 26; Prov 4:8, 9, 10; 26:1; Isa 41:2; Jer 48:37; 51:27.[12]

Antithesis

Antithesis is the opposition of terms and/or meaning in associated clauses. "A sentence is antithetical when either terminology or meaning, or both at once, are opposite in opposed clauses.… Antithesis in both respects, meaning and in terminology, would be most effective, but the two remaining forms are also antithetical" (Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet. Alex.* 26 [1435b]).[13]

ἀμφοτέρους δ' ὤνησαν,
καὶ τοὺς ὑπομείναντας
καὶ τοὺς ἀκολουθήσαντας·
τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πλείω τῆς οἴκοι προσεκτήσαντο,
τοῖς δὲ ἱκανήν τὴν οἴκοι κατέλιπον

[12] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 118–19.

[13] Cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 22–23: "The antithesis may lie in the content … or it may be twofold, in content and language.… There are also clauses which have only verbal antithesis."

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They were useful to both,
both those who stayed
and those who followed;
for the latter they gained in addition greater possessions than they had at home,
for the former they left what was sufficient in their own country.
(Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.7)[14]

πλέων μὲν διὰ τῆς ἠπείρου,
πεζεύων δὲ διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης.[15]

sailing across the mainland,
and marching across the sea.
(Demetrius, *Eloc*. 22)

Antithesis strictly of terms:

διδότω γὰρ
ὁ πλούσιος καὶ εὐδαίμων
τῷ πένητι καὶ ἐνδεῖ.

Let the rich and prosperous
give to the poor and needy.
(Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet*. *Alex*. 26 [1435b])

Antithesis strictly of meaning:

ἐγὼ μὲν τοῦτον νοσοῦντα ἐθεράπευσα,
οὗτος δ' ἐμοὶ μεγίστων κακῶν αἴτιος γέγονεν.

I nursed him when he was ill,
but he has caused me a very great deal of harm.
(Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet*. *Alex*. 26 [1435b])

Biblical scholars also describe this device under the term *antithesis*, though often subsumed as a form of "parallelism," as in Watson's "proper anti-congruence" and "reflexive anti-congruence." In practice, parisosis and antithesis often go together naturally, as witnessed in the Greco-Roman theorists' examples of antithesis above.

יַעֲלוּ שָׁמַיִם
יֵרְדוּ תְהוֹמוֹת

They mounted up to heaven,
they went down to the depths.
(Ps 107:26)

[14] See the remainder of *Rhet*. 3.9.7 for similar examples, most of which entail the opposition mentioned in Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet. Alex.* of both terms and meaning.

[15] Isocrates, *Panegyr*. 89.

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בְּפִי־אֱוִיל חֹטֶר גַּאֲוָה
וְשִׂפְתֵי חֲכָמִים תִּשְׁמוּרֵם

In the mouth of a fool is a rod for his back,
But the lips of the wise will preserve them.
(Prov 14:3)

אֶתֶּן־לְךָ מֶלֶךְ בְּאַפִּי
וְאֶקַּח בְּעֶבְרָתִי

I gave you a king in my anger,
and I took him away in my wrath.
(Hos 13:11)

Hebrew poetry also employs respectively what the Greeks call antithesis strictly of terms and antithesis strictly of meaning.

Opposition strictly of terms:

קָרְבוּ רֹדְפֵי זִמָּה
מִתּוֹרָתְךָ רָחָקוּ

They who persecute me with evil purpose draw near;
they are far from your law.
(Ps 119:150)

Opposition strictly of meaning:

עֵינֵי יְהוָה נָצְרוּ דָעַת
וַיְסַלֵּף דִּבְרֵי בֹגֵד

The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge,
but he overthrows the words of the faithless.
(Prov 22:12)

See also Isa 3:24a; Prov 10:3, 4, 12; 11:14; 12:20; 13:8, 24; 14: 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, etc.; 15:6; 20:9.

Paramoeosis

Paramoeosis is parallelism of sound among associated clauses.

Paramoeosis goes further than parisosis, as it not only makes the members equal in length but assimilates them by constructing them of similar words, for example: εἰ δεῖ σοι λόγου μίμημα, φέρε πόθου τεχνημα. ["If you want an imitation of wording, produce a simulation of wishing."] Assimilate specially the termination of words—this is the best way of producing paramoeosis. Similar words are those formed of similar syllables, having most of their letters the same: for example, πλήθει μὲν ἐνδεῶς, δυνάμει δὲ ἐντελῶς. ["In number defectively but in capacity effectively."] (Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet. Alex.* 28 [1436a])[16]

[16] Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.9.9: "The similarity of final syllables of each clause [is] paramoiosis.

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Paramoeosis encompasses a number of subtypes. Among these are:

(a) Homoeoteleuton. Repetition of sound at the end of associated clauses, especially in the final syllables of final words.[17] "Similarity of cadence, the same syllables being placed at the end of each clause; this is called *homoeoteleuton*, that is to say, the similar ending of one or more clauses" (Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.77 [Russell, LCL]).

> πολλάκις ἐθαύμασα
> τῶν τὰς πανηγύρεις συναγαγόντων
> καὶ τοὺς γυμνικοὺς ἀγῶνας καταστησάντων.
>
> I have often wondered
> at those who convened the assemblies
> and instituted the athletic contests.
> (Demetrius, *Eloc*. 25)

> Audaciter territas,
> humiliter placas.
>
> Blusteringly you threaten;
> cringingly you appease.
> (Rhet. Her. 4.28)

> Abiit excessit,
> erupit evasit.[18]
>
> He went off,
> he left,
> he broke out,
> he got away.
> (Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.77)

Watson identifies the broad phenomenon in Hebrew poetry under the headings of "end-rhyme" and "end-assonance." These are but the strongest types of

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This must take place at the beginning or end of clauses. At the beginning the similarity is always shown in entire words; at the end, in the last syllables, or the inflexions of one and the same word, or the repetition of the same word." Aristotle thus limits paramoeosis to the subspecies, respectively, of anaphora, homoeoteleuton, polyptoton, and antistrophe. Later Greco-Roman theorists, however, identify additional types.

[17] Homoeoteleuton includes repetition of sound found even in single, unstressed concluding syllables of associated cola. Some define homoeoteleuton more narrowly to exclude like declension endings, a symmetry of sound referred to by these theorists as homoeooptoton. "Homoeoteleuton occurs when the word endings are similar, although the words are indeclinable" (Rhet. Her. 4.28). On this distinction, see Karl Polheim, *Die lateinische Reimprosa* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1925), 161–62. The theorists thus disagree concerning whether homoeoteleuton includes homoeooptoton (see Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §731). For the purposes of this study, I will follow the broader understanding reflected in Quintilian's definition.

[18] Cicero, *Cat*. 2.1.

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correspondence, however, that fall under the broader "homoeoteleuton," which also includes a correspondence of final, single, unstressed syllables—a figure more appreciated in Mediterranean antiquity than Western modernity, and one that has been largely overlooked in modern, Western accounts of ancient Hebrew poetic device. Allowing for this correspondence greatly multiplies the number of occurrences of end assonance.

אִם־אָשְׂמַח כִּי־רַב חֵילִי
וְכִי־כַבִּיר מָצְאָה יָדִי

If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great,
or because my hand had gotten much;
(Job 31:25)

אַל־תַּעַזְבֶהָ וְתִשְׁמְרֶךָּ
אֱהָבֶהָ וְתִצָּרֶךָּ

Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.
(Prov 4:6)

See also Job 10:8b–12; 21:14–15a; Pss 15:1; 18:3, 15; 123:3ab, 4bc; Prov 4:5, 8; Isa 10:5; 33:22; Nah 1:2; 2:1.[19]

(b) Homoeokatarkton. Repetition of sound at the beginning of associated clauses, especially in the final syllables of the first words.[20] "At the beginning the similarity [paramoeosis] is always shown in entire words" (Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.9). "There are also clauses with assonance [paromoia]. The assonance is either at the beginning [homoeokatarkton] … or at the end [homoeoteleuton]" (Demetrius, *Eloc*. 25).

Ἀγρὸν γὰρ ἔλαβεν
ἀργὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

[F]or he received from him land untilled.
(Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.9)

δωρητοί τ' ἐπέλοντο
παράρρητοι τ' ἐπέεσσιν.[21]

[T]hey were ready to accept gifts
and to be persuaded by words.
(Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.9; also cited by Demetrius, *Eloc*. 25)

[19] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 222–25, 229–35.

[20] Greco-Roman theorists generally refer to this device as "paramoeosis at the beginning"; I use the anachronistic "homoeokatarkton" for convenience, following Robertson, *Gorgianic Figures*, 18.

[21] From Homer, *Il*. 9.526.

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πλήθει μὲν ἐνδεῶς,
ὑνάμει δὲ ἐντελῶς.

In number defectively
but in capacity effectively.
(Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet. Alex.* 28 [1436a])

Watson refers to the same phenomenon in Hebrew poetry as "colon-initial assonance."[22]

כִּי־עָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁפָּטִי וְדִינִי
יָשַׁבְתָּ לְכִסֵּא שׁוֹפֵט צֶדֶק

For you have maintained my just cause;
you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment.
(Ps 9:5)

קָשְׁרֵם עַל־לִבֶּךָ תָּמִיד
עָנְדֵם עַל־גַּרְגְּרֹתֶךָ

Bind them always upon your heart;
tie them around your neck.
(Prov 6:21)

אֵיכָה יָשְׁבָה בָדָד הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עָם
הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבָּתִי בַגּוֹיִם

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!
How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations!
(Lam 1:1)

See also Job 8:11; Pss 89:13, 15; 102:7; 107:26; Song 6:2b; Jer 12:2cd, 7; Nah 1:2.[23]

(c) Antistrophe. The repetition of the same word at the end of associated clauses.[24] "Antistrophe is the opposite of epanaphora; for as the latter begins with the same words, so the former ends with the same words" (Alexander Numenius, *De figuris* [*Fig.*] 3.29).[25]

[22] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 223–25.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Also known as *epiphora*. Demetrius treats this device as a form of homoeoteleuton (cf. *Eloc.* 26).

[25] Citations for Alexander Numenius are from Leonhard von Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1853–1856); translations are my own. "In Antistrophe, we repeat, not the first word in successive phrases, as in Epanaphora, but the last" (Rhet. Her. 4.19). "A series of clauses may … end with the same words" (Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.30). Demetrius treats antistrophe as a species of homoeoteleuton (e.g., Demetrius, *Eloc.* 26).

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ἐπὶ σαυτὸν καλεῖς,
ἐπὶ τοὺς νόμους καλεῖς,
ἐπὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν καλεῖς.[26]

against yourself you summon him,
against the laws you summon him,
against the democracy you summon him.
(Demetrius, *Eloc*. 267)

Quis eos postulavit? Appius.
Quis produxit? Appius.

Who asked for them? Appius.
Who produced them? Appius.
(Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.30–31)

Watson identifies this device in Hebrew poetry as "end repetition" and "epistrophe." He observes that it is not commonly employed.

וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
וּבָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ

And the sun rises,
And the sun goes down.
(Eccl 1:5)

כִּי צַו לָצָו
צַו לָצָו
קַו לָקָו
קַו לָקָו
זְעֵיר שָׁם
זְעֵיר שָׁם

For it is precept upon precept,
precept upon precept,
line upon line,
line upon line,
here a little,
there a little.
(Isa 28:10)[27]

(d) Anaphora. The repetition of the same word at the beginning of associated clauses. "A series of clauses may … begin with the same words, with great effect and urgency" (Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.30).[28]

[26] From Aeschines, *Ctes*. 202.

[27] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 276.

[28] Also known as epanaphora: "Epanaphora is when two or more cola begin with the same expression" (Alexander, *Fig*. 3.20.30). "Epanaphora occurs when one and the same word forms successive beginnings for phrases expressing like and different ideas" (Rhet. Her. 4.19).

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ἐπὶ σαυτὸν καλεῖς,
ἐπὶ τοὺς νόμους καλεῖς,
ἐπὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν καλεῖς.[29]

against yourself you summon him,
against the laws you summon him
against the democracy you summon him.
(Demetrius, *Eloc.* 267)

Tu in forum prodire,
Tu lucem conspicere,
Tu in horum conspectum venire conaris?

You venture to enter the Forum?
You venture to face the light?
You venture to come into the sight of these men?
(Rhet. Her. 4.19)

Watson refers to the device in Hebrew poetry both as "repetition-initial" and "anaphora."

מִי עָלָה־שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרֶד
מִי אָסַף־רוּחַ בְּחָפְנָיו
מִי צָרַר־מַיִם בַּשִּׂמְלָה
מִי הֵקִים כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ
מַה־שְּׁמוֹ
וּמַה־שֵּׁם־בְּנוֹ

Who has ascended to heaven and descended?
Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of the hand?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is the person's name?
And what is his son's name?
(Prov 30:4)

וְהָיָה
בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ
וּבֵית יוֹסֵף לֶהָבָה
וּבֵית עֵשָׂו לְקַשׁ

And it shall be that
the house of Jacob is a fire,
and the house of Joseph a flame,
and the house of Esau stubble;
(Obad 18)

[29] From Aeschines, *Ctes.* 202.

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See also Job 19:23; Pss 15:1; 40:1, 6; Prov 30:11–14; 30:4; Eccl 1:4, 8; Isa 3:24; Jer 15:5; 23:10; 51:20–23; Lam 2:5; Mic 1:9; 5:9–13; 7:11–12; Nah 2:10; 3:2; Zeph 1:15–16; Zech 1:14ab.[30]

(e) Anadiplosis. The repetition of a word found at the end of one clause and at the beginning of the subsequent clause.[31] "Again, the last word of one phrase is often the same as the first word of the next, a Figure which poets frequently use … and even the orators not rarely" (Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.44).

> Pierides, vos haec facietis maxima Gallo,
> Gallo, cuius amor tantum mihi crescit in horas.
>
> Pierides, you shall do these great things for Gallus,
> for Gallus, for whom my love grows hour by hour.
> (Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.44)

> Iove propagatus est, ut perhibent, Tantalus,
> ex Tantalo ortus Pelops,
> ex Pelope autem satus Atreus, qui nostrum porro propagat genus. [32]
>
> From Jove, or so they say, came Tantalus,
> from Tantalus sprang Pelops, and from Pelops
> Atreus, who fathered all our family.
> (Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.57)

Watson labels occurrences of this figure in Hebrew poetry "anadiplosis" and "the terrace pattern."

> … ארו אָרֹור יֹׁשְבֶיהָ
> כִּי לֹא־בָאוּ לְעֶזְרַת יְהוָה
> לְעֶזְרַת יְהוָה בַּגִּבֹּורִים
>
> … curse its inhabitants thoroughly,
> because they did not come to the help of the Lord,
> to the help of the Lord against the mighty.
> (Judg 5:23)

[30] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 276. Instances of "staircase parallelism" also belong to this device, e.g., Num 24:3 (= 24:15), Pss 29:1–2, 96:7–9, Prov 31:4. See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 152.

[31] Also known as *palillogia*, *epanadiplosis*. "Palillogia is a speech or expression that on the one hand concludes a preceding clause and on the other hand begins a following clause" (Zonaeus, *De figuris* 3.165.24). "Epanadiplosis [is] when what here concludes the first colon, there begins the second colon" (Tiberius, *De figuris* [*Fig.*] 3.70.12). Citations for Zonaeus and Tiberius are from Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci*; translations are my own.

[32] Homer, *Il.* 2.101–108 offers an example of polyptotonic anadiplosis.

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וְנָתַן אַרְצָם נַחֲלָה
נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ

and gave their land as a heritage,
a heritage to his people Israel.
(Ps 135:12)

See also Pss 115:12, 14; 116:16; 136:21–22; Isa 24:18; 29:17; 38:11; Ezek 22:2; Hos 2:23–24; Joel 1:3–4; Amos 4:7; Nah 1:2.[33]

(f) Polyptoton. The repetition of the same word in different inflections—most commonly case, but also gender and number.[34] "The inflexions of one and the same word" (Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.9).[35]

ἄχιος δὲ σταθῆναι χαλκοῦς,
οὐκ ἄχιος ὢν χαλκοῦ

worthy of a bronze statue,
not being worth a brass farthing
(Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.9)

Alexander Macedo summo labore animum ad virtutem a pueritia confirmavit.
Alexandri virtutes per orbem terrae cum laude et gloria vulgatae sunt.
Alexandrum omnes maxime metuerunt, idem plurimum dilexerunt.
Alexandro si vita data longior esset, trans Oceanum Macedonum transvolassent sarisae.

Alexander of Macedon with consummate toil from boyhood trained his mind to virtue.

[33] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 208–12.

[34] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §641: "The theoreticians prefer to include only the inflected alterations of the noun (ὄνομα) and pronoun (ἀντωνυμία) under the term πολύπτωτον, in particular the case-alterations (πτῶσις = *casus*), but also the gender and number alterations, as well as the adverbial formations of adjectives and pronoun stems. Not included, therefore, are the verbal alterations, which are subsumed under another term [paronomasia]." Some theorists distinguish the inflection of pronouns as a separate device—usually "metabole"; see Tiberius, *Fig.* 3.76.30; Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.37; cf. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §645. The theorists' examples of polyptoton usually entail anaphoric repetition, but the device "is found empirically in all types of word repetition" (Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §642).

[35] Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.36–37: "This Figure is formed both with cases alone (it is then called *polyptoton*) and in other ways." Quintilian reserves "polyptoton" strictly for changes in case but nonetheless views other changes as belonging to the same general figure: Aquila Romanus, by contrast, subsumes changes in gender, case, and number under "polyptoton" (*De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis* 37). Some theorists also treat the figure as a form of paronomasia: "There is a third form of paronomasia, depending on a change of case in one or more proper nouns" (Rhet. Her. 4.30–31); cf. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §644.

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> Alexander's virtues have been broadcast with fame and glory throughout the world.
> All men greatly feared Alexander, yet deeply loved him.
> Had long life been granted Alexander, the Macedonian lances would have flown across the ocean.
> (Rhet. Her. 4.31)[36]

Though Hebrew does not have case endings, it does have endings denoting gender and number, and in this connection, we encounter an effective equivalent of the device. Watson's "wordplay" includes a subtype called the "turn" or "figura etymologica" which entails root-repetition in different forms. When the recurrence involves a noun or pronoun, and the variation a change in number, gender, suffix, prefix, and so on, the device corresponds to the Greek and Latin polyptoton (though in Hebrew, there is no reason as in Greek and Latin to distinguish this kind of root play from others). All other occurrences of Watson's "figura etymologica" belong to the broader paronomasia.

> הוֹי הֲמוֹן עַמִּים
> רַבִּים כַּהֲמוֹת יַמִּים
> יֶהֱמָיוּן וּשְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים
> כִּשְׁאוֹן מַיִם כַּבִּירִים יִשְׁאוּן
>
> Oh, the thunder of the many peoples,
> they thunder like the thundering of the sea!
> the roar of nations,
> roaring like the roar of mighty waters!
> (Isa 17:12)

> שׁוּבוּ בָּנִים שׁוֹבָבִים
> אֶרְפָּה מְשׁוּבֹתֵיכֶם
>
> Return, O faithless children,
> I will heal your faithlessness.
> (Jer 3:22)

See also Prov 7:14; Ps 35:1; Isa 24:16; 32:19.[37]

(g) Paronomasia. An etymological or pseudo-etymological play on words.[38] "Paronomasia is the figure in which, by means of a modification of sound, or

[36] Harry Caplan notes that the absence of the ablative suggests the example is borrowed from the Greek (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, LCL [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954], 306 n. c).

[37] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 239.

[38] Also known as *admonitio*; it may be used like other devices to tie cola together through parallel positioning—but it may also appear within a single colon without any effect on periodology. Included among the etymological variety of paronomasia are occurrences of the same word with two or more different meanings. See, e.g., Quintilian's example involving a word used a

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change of letters, a close resemblance to a given verb or noun is produced, so that similar words express dissimilar things" (Rhet. Her. 4.29). "There is a third class of Figures which appeals to the ear and arouses attention by some resemblance, equality, or contrast of sounds. To this class belongs Paronomasia, which we call *admonition*" (Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.66).

Etymological wordplays:

> Hic sibi posset temperare,
> nisi amori mallet obtemperare
>
> This man could rule himself,
> if only he did not prefer to submit to love
> (Rhet. Her. 4.29)

> [N]e patres conscripti
> videantur circumscripti
>
> [T]hat the conscript fathers
> should not be *circumscripti* ('cheated').
> (Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.72; also cited in nonperiodic form in Rhet. Her. 4.30[39])

Pseudo-etymological wordplays:

> Si lenones vitasset tamquam leones, vitae tradidisset se
>
> If he had avoided panders as though they were lions, he would have devoted himself to life.
> (Rhet. Her. 4.29)

> Hinc ăvium dulcedo ducit ad āvium.
>
> The sweet song of the birds draws us from here into the pathless places.
> (Rhet. Her. 4.29; also cited by Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.69)

> ᾠήθησαν αὐτὸν παιδίον τετοκέναι,
> ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ αἴτιον γεγονέναι
>
> [T]hey thought that he was the father of a child,
> but that he was the cause of it.
> (Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.9)[40]

---

second time with a "deeper sense": quando homo hostis, homo ("Since our enemy is a human being, he is human"; Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.67).

[39] Rhet. Her. 4.30: Demus operam, Quirites, ne omnino patres conscripti circumscripti putentur. ("Let us see to it, fellow-citizens, that the Conscript Fathers be not thought to have been utterly duped").

[40] This is an instance of homoeoteleuton, which may be viewed as a subspecies of paronomasia (Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §638)—hence the confusion of the terms in the

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Watson refers to this same device in Hebrew poetry as "wordplay," identifying subtypes that could be variously classified as etymological or pseudo-etymological. Among the former are the "turn" (repetition of the same root in different forms) and the "polysemantic pun" (the single use of a word in a "double entendre").[41] Among the latter are "rootplay" (the alliterative transposition of consonants in a key verbal root) and, somewhat confusingly for our purposes, what Watson calls "paronomasia" (in Watson's narrow usage, pseudo-etymological wordplay involving two different words that sound nearly alike).[42]

Etymological—turn:

בֹּגְדִים בָּגָדוּ וּבֶגֶד בּוֹגְדִים בָּגָדוּ

The treacherous deal treacherously,
In treachery the treacherous deal treacherously.
(Isa 24:16c)

See also Isa 17:12; Jer 3:22; Prov 7:14.[43]

Etymological—polysemantic pun:

דּוֹדִי שָׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹר
וּמֵעַי הָמוּ עָלָיו

My beloved withdrew his hand/penis from the opening,
And my insides groaned longingly at the thought of him.
(Song 5:4)[44]

See also Judg 14:14; Job 7:6; Prov 28:3; Eccl 12:4; Isa 29:4; 30:1; 57:6; Song 8:1–2.[45]

Pseudo-etymological—rootplay:

צָרֵי רְצִין

Rezin's enemies
(Isa 9:10)

See also Num 24:8; Job 29:17; 36:15; Pss 5:10; 18:4, 7; 83:3; 99:6–8; 133:1; Prov

handbooks. Homoeokatarkton may also be viewed as a subtype of paronomasia. The same may even be said, too, for antistrophe and anaphora, since the theorists allow that the same word used in two distinct senses in a wordplay is a form of paronomasia, and since in theory it is possible the same word used in such a wordplay could begin or end parallel clauses.

[41] A third category of Watson's, punning repetition (using the same word twice, with two different meanings), also belongs here, but occurrences are rare and obscure (see *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 242).

[42] Ibid., 237–50.

[43] Ibid., 239.

[44] I am thankful to my colleague Brandon Fredenburg for the suggested translation, which captures well the full array of double entendres.

[45] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 241–42.

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6:7–8; 7:21; 23:27–28; Eccl 12:11; Isa 30:17; 31:8; 38:10, 11; 40:22; Jer 4:12; Ezek 30:17; Nah 1:10; Sir 14:9; 32:21ab.[46]

Pseudo-etymological—paronomasia:

לֹא־עָשָׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ רָעָה

He does no evil to his neighbor.
(Ps 15:3b)

See also Job 29:16a; 31:40a; Pss 18:13; 28:5; 129:5–6; 148:3–5; Song 1:3; Isa 31:1, 2; 33:4; 63:2; Lam 3:1; Sir 4:11; 9:8.[47]

II. Periodic Structure

The Greco-Roman theorists' discussions of Gorgianic figures commonly include as a central matter of concern commentary on the impact of the figures on structure. Early theorists such as Aristotle observe that, when the Gorgianic figures are employed in prose composition, they form tightly wound, rounded sentences or "periods" with balanced, symmetrical clauses or "cola." These clauses are a product of the symmetries of sound, sense, and structure native to the figures themselves.

Observing the structure of the period, Aristotle states that it "has a beginning and end in itself and a magnitude that can be easily grasped" (*Rhet*. 3.9.2); and he contrasts it with the ordinary sentence of "continuous" prose, which "has no end in itself and only stops when the sense is complete" (*Rhet*. 3.9.3). This "beginning" of the period, referred to by some theorists as the πρότασις, introduces a tension that is resolved in the end, the ἀπόδοσις.[48] Thus, the period is characterized by a poetic drama that, as Aristotle observes, is both pleasurable and memorable (*Rhet*. 3.9.3).

While theorists after Aristotle attest a broadening understanding of the period that includes even non-Gorgianic sentences, they retain as a *concept* the notion of the more tightly symmetrical Gorgianic-Isocratean sentence formed by the figures—or what Aristotle calls the "period." Demetrius thus writes of "rhetorical periods" constructed from Gorgianic figures in the "compact style" of Isocrates, Gorgias, and Alcidimas (*Eloc*. 12–29); Cicero, of the "rhythmical period" (*Or. Brut*. 211 [Hubbell, LCL]) in the "periodic style of Isocrates and Theopompus" (*Or. Brut*. 207) and featuring Gorgianic figures (*Or. Brut*. 220); Quintilian, of the "tight" period that has "definite rhythms" and may be contrasted with periods employing "looser and freer rhythms" (*Inst*. 9.4.125–130); and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, of

[46] Ibid., 239–40.

[47] Ibid., 243. See also his additional examples of vowel-based "assonantal paronomasia."

[48] See Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §924.

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the "musical" and "rhythmic" period shaped by antithesis, paramoeosis, and parisosis in the "polished style" of Isocrates (*Comp*. 22–23 [Usher, LCL]).

From the Greco-Roman theorists' examples of the figures above, one can readily grasp what the theorists are describing. In nearly every case, the figure in question in its own way divides the sentence into clearly discernible, parallel cola that give the sentence a circuitous, periodic form. In some cases, the symmetry runs the full length of the sentence, as in Anaximenes's example of parisosis.

> ἢ διὰ χρημάτων ἀπορίαν
> ἢ διὰ πολέμου μέγεθος.
>
> Either owing to lack of funds
> or owing to the magnitude of the war.
> (Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhet*. *Alex*. 27 [1436a])

In other cases, the symmetry is only partial, as in Aristotle's example of antithesis.[49]

> ἀμφοτέρους δ' ὤνησαν,
> καὶ τοὺς ὑπομείναντας
> καὶ τοὺς ἀκολουθήσαντας·
>
> They were useful to both,
> both those who stayed
> and those who followed;
> (Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.9.7)

The same is true, too, for biblical scholars' examples from Hebrew poetry. One sees full symmetry, as in Watson's model end repetition (= antistrophe), Eccl 1:5:

> וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
> וּבָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ
>
> And the sun rises,
> And the sun goes down.

One also finds partial symmetry, as in Watson's model parallelism (= parisosis), Ps 1:1:

> אַשְׁרֵי־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
> לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת רְשָׁעִים
> וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמָד
> וּבְמוֹשַׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב
>
> Blessed is the one who
> walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
> nor stands in the way of sinners,
> nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

More often than not, multiple Gorgianic figures both in Greco-Roman and Hebrew composition coordinate in the production of a single period. It is natural,

[49] On full and partial symmetry, see Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §§735–37.

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for example, to reinforce the symmetries of parisosis with the various symmetries of sound that fall under paramoeosis. Similarly, parisosis and antithesis are a natural pairing, as multiple illustrations above show.

In any case, these examples, which are only a small sample of a much larger body of evidence that could be readily summoned, show that the characteristic formal structure of ornate prose—as the Greco-Roman theorists describe it, the Gorgianic "period"—also happens to be a characteristic, formal structure of Hebrew poetic writing.

III. Rhythm

Closely associated in ancient rhetorical theory with periodic prose generally and the Gorgianic-Isocratean period specifically is "rhythm." The theorists liken poetic rhythm to poetic meter, noting that the former, like the latter, has a perceptible beat or musical quality. The difference, though, is that meter displays a regularity of beat throughout a piece, as in the hexameters and pentameters of classical Greek poetry; rhythm, by contrast, is irregular in the sense that it can change from sentence to sentence as an inevitable by-product of well-written prose.

In Aristotle's opinion, *all* prose is ideally rhythmical in this sense: "Wherefore prose must be rhythmical, but not metrical, otherwise it will be a poem. Nor must this rhythm be rigorously carried out, but only up to a certain point" (Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.7.3). Later theorists, however, while echoing Aristotle's rule against regularity, associate "rhythm" exclusively with the "periodic," "polished," "compact," or "high" prose of Gorgias and Isocrates—that is, with prose formed by the Gorgianic figures.

Demetrius observes in the "rhetorical displays of Isocrates, Gorgias, and Alcidama" that "period succeeds period no less regularly than the hexameters in Homer's poetry" and attributes "rhythm" only to the "rhetorical periods" of such prose (*Eloc*. 12). Cicero similarly singles out the periodic prose of Isocrates as displaying "a certain rhythm and measure"; as being "structure-like, so to speak, in the joining of words"; and as featuring a deliberate "rhythmical rounding out of the sentence," something "gathered up in fitting words" and ending "with a rhythmical cadence" (*Brut*. 33–34 [Hendrickson, LCL]). Like Demetrius and, evidently, Theophrastus before him (Cicero provides our only testimony to Theophrastus on this matter), Cicero commends the use of rhythm in elevated prose specifically: "For I agree with the opinion of Theophrastus, that polished and systematic prose must have a rhythm, though not rigid, yet fairly loose." (*De or.* 3.184 [Hubbell, LCL]).

Cicero also observes with most theorists that such rhythm lacks the regularity of beat in metered poetry and music.

> "Well then," said Crassus, "we must make our style conform to this law of rhythm both by practice in speaking and by using the pen, which is a good tool for giving style and polish both to other forms of composition and particularly to oratory.

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> All the same, this is not so laborious a job as it looks, nor is it necessary to regulate these matters by the strictest rule of the metricians or musicians; all that we have to achieve is that the language shall not be diffuse and rambling, stopping short of the mark or wandering on too far, and that the parts of the structure shall be distinct and the periods finished." (*De or.* 3.190)[50]

Cicero notes that the metrical feet supplying rhythm in prose will appear of their own accord so that the writer need not supply them intentionally.

> And at the same time it is not necessary to use long sentences and periods all the time; on the contrary, the discourse should frequently be divided up into smaller members, although these themselves should possess a rhythmical unity of structure. Nor need you worry about the paeans or the dactyls we were talking about: they will turn up in prose of their own accord—yes, they will fall in and report themselves as present without being summoned. (*De or.* 3.191)

Of particular significance to the present discussion, Cicero observes that the Gorgianic figures themselves are sources of rhythm, and that they are so because of the symmetries they produce.

> Moreover, there are certain figures of speech which involve such a symmetry that rhythm is the necessary result. For when clauses are equally balanced [parisosis], or opposite is set against opposite [antithesis], or words are matched with words of similar endings [paramoiosis], whatever is elaborated in this way generally has a rhythmical cadence. We discussed this form or type above with examples. (*Or. Brut.* 220)

In his theoretical account of literary style, *On Composition*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus echoes many of these same themes. The theorist sketches in the work a spectrum of writing that runs from "austere" on one end to "polished" on the other (*Comp.* 22–23). He observes that the austere is nonmusical and lacks structural balance and rhythm; it "aims to make its clauses not parallel in structure or sound, nor slaves to rigid sequence." Polished prose, he notes, is by contrast musical in nature; "it requires its periods to proceed in steps measured, as it were, by a rule, and to have rhythmic clausulae." Like other theorists, Dionysius cites Isocrates as an example of rhythmic prose, observing that it is shaped by antithesis, paramoeosis, and parisosis—the three Gorgianic figures.

Both Cicero and Demetrius, it should be underscored, attest the same understanding of "rhythm" as beat patterns repeated within parallel clauses of symmetrical, Gorgianic periods. These repetitions, they say, are a product of the parallel structures produced by Gorgianic prose. Such rhythm is "irregular" only in the

[50] See also *De or.* 3.185: "… also, if all sounds and utterances contain an element of rhythm possessing certain beats and capable of being measured by its regular intervals, it will be proper to reckon this kind of rhythm as a merit in prose, provided that it is not used in an unbroken succession"; and *Or. Brut.* 198: "And in spoken prose, a passage is regarded as rhythmical not when it is composed entirely of metrical forms, but when it comes very close to being so."

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sense that the patterns change from period to period and so may be contrasted with Greek poetry and music, which retain the same pattern throughout a composition.[51] They are nonetheless "regular," to use the parlance of Hebrew biblical scholarship, within the periods themselves.

Returning to the Greco-Roman and Hebrew examples from above, one may read through the model Greco-Roman periods and witness the general effect on rhythm described by the theorists of the Gorgianic figures and their periodic structure. The figures, as we see from these examples, generally produce parallel cola with roughly parallel phrasing patterns, which in turn tend to produce a general symmetry of rhythm among the cola. Though the theorists have in view the quantitative rhythms of Greek and Latin, the effect is no different in languages where rhythm occurs qualitatively through stress. In either case, rhythmic parallelism is an inevitable by-product of clauses intentionally being made to mirror one another closely through symmetrical phrasing. The point is an important one to make, given that biblical scholarship has never arrived at a consensus on scanning methodology for Hebrew poetry or even pronunciation appropriate for the ancient Hebrew language.[52] Absent clarity on these points, the evidence from Greco-Roman theory provides a clearer path toward understanding Hebrew poetic rhythm, given that it proceeds on the surer footing of figures whose use is clearly demonstrable.

Of course, the rhythm evident in the model periods above can and does change from period to period, depending on the figures used and the length of the cola created. What is clear, though, from the theorists' examples is that the figures and their desired symmetries are driving the compositional energy, and *not* a desire to arrive at a predetermined number and pattern of beats per colon. The variation from period to period itself is evidence of this fact—hence Cicero's observation that metrical feet "will turn up in prose of their own accord."

A recognition that rhythmic variation results from the figures used and their symmetries potentially redirects and advances scholars' understanding of meter and Hebrew composition. Those who have argued for regular rhythm or meter in Hebrew poetry acknowledge a great diversity of rhythmic patterns and point not to a single pattern or two that govern Hebrew poetic composition as a rule, but rather patterns that are (in their view) *commonly used*. I would observe, however, that it is more accurate to speak of these patterns as *commonly occurring*, and would cite in evidence the same phenomenon of commonly occurring patterns in the periods of Greco-Roman ornate prose—patterns that, by the Greeks' and Romans'

[51] This notion of irregularity is to be contrasted with that of modern biblical scholarship, which has typically applied the notion of irregularity to individual cola within a period (as in the much discussed 3 + 2 pattern). From the perspective of the Greco-Roman theorists, such irregularity is not even rhythm, since it lacks a single repetition of a beat pattern.

[52] See the discussion in Goh, *Basics of Hebrew Poetry*, 70–72.

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own accounts, are neither regular in rhythm nor written in conformity to desired beat patterns.

Watson, whose volume on Hebrew poetry is rightly acknowledged as an essential work on the subject, may serve as a good example of the scholarly perspective I have in mind. Watson cites the 2 + 2, 3 + 3, and 4 + 4 beat patterns as among those characteristic of Hebrew meter, but he is careful to acknowledge that these are hardly the rule for Hebrew composition, and that they are only the most common types. He then cites Mic 3:9–12 as a "good illustration" of an alleged "regular metrical pattern," even as he acknowledges in an accompanying footnote that few such examples have been found.[53]

Micah 3:9–12: Watson's Beat Analysis	*Number of stresses*
שִׁמְעוּ־נָא זֹאת	2
רָאשֵׁי בֵּית יַעֲקֹב	2
וּקְצִינֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל	2
הַמֵּתַעֲבִים מִשְׁפָּט	2
וְאֶת כָּל־הַיְשָׁרָה יְעַקֵּשׁוּ	2
בֹּנֶה צִיּוֹן בְּדָמִים	2
וִירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם בְּעַוְלָה	2

[9]Listen to this,
you rulers of Jacob's house
and chiefs of Israel's house,
who abhor justice
and all that is straight make crooked,
[10]who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with wrong!

רָאשֶׁיהָ בְּשֹׁחַד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ	3
וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ בִּמְחִיר יוֹרוּ	3
וּנְבִיאֶיהָ בְּכֶסֶף יְקֹסֵמוּ	3
וְעַל־יְהוָה יִשָּׁעֵנוּ לֵאמֹר	3
הֲלוֹא יְהוָה בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ	3
לֹא־תָבוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה	3

[11]Its rulers for a bribe give judgment,
its priests for a price teach,
its prophets for silver give oracles;

[53] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 101. Watson (101 n. 51), following Tremper Longman III, concedes that "few such analyses have been made yet," referring the reader to only four "other worked examples" in Alan Mitchell Cooper, "Biblical Poetics: A Linguistic Approach" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1976), 112–39 (Prov 8:22–31); Jerzy Kuryłowicz, *Metrik und Sprachgeschichte*, Prace językoznawczi 83 (Warsaw: Ossolineum, 1975), 222 (Ps 44); Tremper Longman III, "A Critique of Two Recent Metrical Systems," *Bib* 63 (1982): 230–54 (Deut 33, Jer 12).

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yet they lean upon the LORD and say,
"Surely the LORD is in the midst of us!
Surely no harm upon us shall come."

לָכֵן בִּגְלָלְכֶם	2
צִיּוֹן שָׂדֶה תֵּחָרֵשׁ	2
וִירוּשָׁלַם עִיִּין תִּהְיֶה	2
וְהַר הַבַּיִת לְבָמוֹת יָעַר	2

[12]Thus on account of you
Zion as a field shall be plowed;
and Jerusalem a heap of ruins shall become,
and the mountain of the house, a wooded height.

But is this a good illustration? By Watson's own scanning, we have three distinct metrical sections in four verses. Verses 9–10 have seven lines of two beats each. Verse 11 has six lines of three beats each. And verse 12, four lines of two beats each. Watson, of course, is referring to the regularity seen within each of these three sections. But even this can be questioned. Given the unsettled nature of Hebrew scanning, one could as readily scan verse 12 as having some lines of three beats each (a product of partial, not full, periodic symmetry). Further, even granting Watson's scanning here, the regularity that briefly emerges strictly within each of these three short sections falls apart in the surrounding verses—and most notably, in the remainder of the larger section of which it is a part, verses 1–12—hence Watson's delimiting of the model passage to just these verses. Indeed, those arguing for regularity of meter are hard-pressed to find any lengthy text that truly displays even the debatable regularity of this "good illustration," much less a composition marked by the full-scale rhythmic uniformity of ancient Mediterranean languages with metered poetry.

What we have here, in fact, is the nonmetrical, rhythmic phenomenon that Cicero described: brief flashes of rhythmic repetitions created by the symmetries of sound, sense, and structure *native to Gorgianic figures and the periods they produce*. The entire piece may thus be analyzed for its use of Gorgianic figures and resultant periodic divisions, and its rhythms explained accordingly.

Verses 9–10 form a tripartite period of nearly full symmetry (the introductory colon lacks a parallel) consisting of three bicola and formed by several occurrences of parisosis.

[9]שִׁמְעוּ־נָא זֹאת
רָאשֵׁי בֵּית יַעֲקֹב
וּקְצִינֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַמֵּתַעֲבִים מִשְׁפָּט
וְאֶת כָּל־הַיְשָׁרָה יְעַקֵּשׁוּ
[10]בֹּנֶה צִיּוֹן בְּדָמִים
וִירוּשָׁלַם בְּעַוְלָה

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[9]Listen to this,
you rulers of Jacob's house
and chiefs of Israel's house,
who abhor justice
and all that is straight make crooked,
[10]who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with wrong!

parisosis (lines 2 and 3): plural noun connoting leaders + בֵּית + proper name connoting the nation

parisosis (lines 4 and 5, chiastic): verb connoting evil action + object connoting good

parisosis (lines 6 and 7): direct object connoting the city + בְּ + object connoting an evil

Verse 11 is a two-part period consisting of two tricola, the first displaying full symmetry and the second, partial. It is formed by parisosis, homoeoteleuton, and anaphora.

[11]רָאשֶׁיהָ בְּשֹׁחַד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ
וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ בִּמְחִיר יוֹרוּ
וּנְבִיאֶיהָ בְּכֶסֶף יְקֹסֵמוּ
וְעַל־יְהוָה יִשָּׁעֵנוּ לֵאמֹר
הֲלוֹא יְהוָה בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ
לֹא־תָבוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה

[11] Its rulers for a bribe give judgment,
its priests for a price teach,
its prophets for silver give oracles;
yet they lean upon the Lord and say,
"Surely the Lord is in the midst of us!
Surely no harm upon us shall come."

parisosis (lines 1–3): plural noun with third-person suffix connoting leaders + בְּ + object connoting monetary exchange + third-person plural verb connoting speech by the leaders

paramoeosis—homoeoteleuton (lines 1–3): …יְקֹסֵמוּ ; … יוֹרוּ ; … יִשְׁפֹּטוּ

parisosis (lines 5–6): לֹא + subject/predicate with first-person suffix

paramoeosis—anaphora (lines 5–6) לֹא …; לֹוא …

Verse 12 consists of an introductory colon followed by three parallel lines. It is constructed via parisosis and anaphora.

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[12]לָכֵן בִּגְלָלְכֶם
צִיּוֹן שָׂדֶה תֵּחָרֵשׁ
וִירוּשָׁלַם עִיִּין תִּהְיֶה
וְהַר הַבַּיִת לְבָמוֹת יָעַר פ

[12]Thus on account of you
Zion as a field shall be plowed;
and Jerusalem a heap of ruins shall become,
and the mountain of the house, a wooded height.

parisosis (lines 2–4): subject connoting Jerusalem/holy mount + predicate connoting disaster

parisosis (lines 2–3) subject + predicate noun + verb

paramoeosis—anaphora (lines 3–4): וְ …; וְ …

In view of this analysis, it is clear that Gorgianic periodology accounts for the rhythmic groupings Watson perceives but does not explain. That is, Watson does not account for *why* a writer decided to compose in two-beat poetry for a brief stretch, then shift to three-beat poetry, and then back again quickly to two-beat poetry[54]—nor does he explain why even that stretch of "regularity" does not characterize the remainder of Micah, which is also highly poetic. Analysis in view of Gorgianic periodology, however, provides a rationale for both phenomena. The composition of 3:9–12, like that of Micah generally, is not formally governed by beat but, rather, by the symmetries of what the Greeks called Gorgianic figures. Thus, the rhythm changes in this brief section from period to period, just as it does throughout Micah. In short, even the best examples of alleged metrical regularity in Hebrew poetic composition may, in fact, be summoned as telling evidence against the metrical thesis—and in illustration instead of what the Greeks and Romans document in their own ornate poetic prose, namely, changing rhythms that "fall in and report themselves as present without being summoned" (Cicero, *De or.* 3.191).

[54] In truth, verse 12 may display a mixture of two-beat (introductory colon 1) and three-beat (parallel cola 2–4) rhythm; the uncertainties of Hebrew scansion preclude certainty on the matter.

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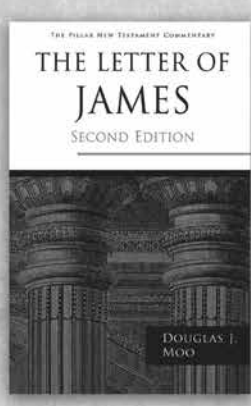

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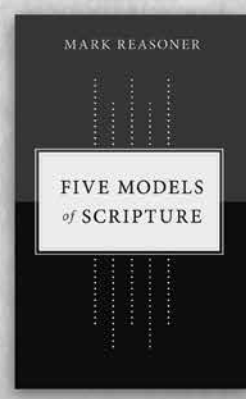

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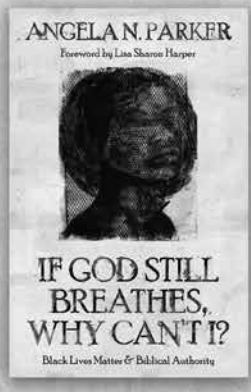

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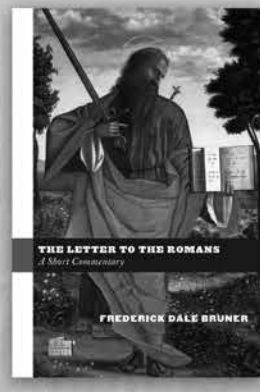

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